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ABSTRACT

A special issue of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) newsletter relates the ideals of human rights as carried out for the Palestine refugees. An overview of the publication and its contents is followed by a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Three articles--The Right to Education, An Adequate Standard of Living, and Motherhood and Childhood--review generally the events of the past 25 years in the Near East and specifically the refugee problems since 1948. A teacher's guide, accompanying the newsletter, explains the focus of human rights for use by children aged 9-12 years and offers suggestions for classroom applications. Specific projects related to human rights are described, including plays, murals, maps, and fairs. Ways in which the themes of racial discrimination and minority rights may be drawn into this unit of study are also noted. (KSM)

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PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Human Rights Day: Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

NEWSLETTER NO. 76 - DECEMBER 1973

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Top: An auto-mechanic trainee.

Below: Health check at the UNRWA Health Centre, Arroub Camp, West Bank of the Jordan.

NOTE TO THE TEACHER

(To Accompany the Human Rights-United Nations Day Pamphlet)

This year, the United Nations Office of Public Information has singled out the younger audience for this pamphlet, hoping it will be particularly useful in late primary years, especially for children 9-12 years old.

Prepared for school use, the publication marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, when the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed it as "a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations".

Many nations have patterned their constitutions on the Declaration.

The United Nations wants you to study the articles of the Declaration and share their meaning with your students so that through your own actions and attitudes, you can make the Declaration a living reality.

Illuminating the ideas contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from the realm of abstraction by giving concrete examples out of the child's own experience can make a significant contribution towards educating a new generation of persons committed to human rights.

These suggestions and activities are an effort to assist you to work with your students on the concepts of human rights as they affect their lives in actuality. These exercises are intended to help students understand what human rights are, how they are violated, and how they might become the desired realities of world society.

Using Resources

Even at the ages of 9-12 years, students can reach out into the wider world from their classrooms to gain information about human rights. A class project might be to write a joint letter to various agencies concerned with human rights, starting with the United Nations, requesting a pamphlet or other materials prepared for the general public. They might write to national and local agencies, or to commissioners on human rights or human relations where such exist. Students could write to those organizations to get information about what is happening in their localities. They should be encouraged to look at this material, but not be made to feel that they must "understand" it. The purpose of getting them to acquire the materials is to give them a sense of the significance of human rights and that there are projects in the

wide world that take the time of adults seriously devoted to the pursuit of human rights. From here you might begin to talk about what they might want to do as adults to help the cause of human rights and then what they can do as young students in schools to help that cause.

Another important resource can be newspapers and magazines, if they are readily available. Children should be encouraged to look for photographs that show people being deprived of rights or that show people being granted their rights under certain situations, such as individuals being given a trial. The photographs could be brought to class and on the basis of what they have read or what has been read to them, they could share with their classmates this information about what is actually happening in the world in the area of human rights.

The Universal Declaration is an important resource. The teacher might go over the list of rights enumerated in the Declaration, explaining what those rights are and giving specific examples. The teacher might have the students note which rights their newspaper and magazine photographs illustrate.

Using these kinds of resources can start students on the road to making their own documents on human rights.

Student Projects

Put on a Play -- Have the children select one fundamental human right; build a play around it, which demonstrates the violation of the right by an outside party and how the conflict is resolved. Write the play down. Select children to play the different roles, and then perform the play for the whole class. A modification would be to divide the class in two, having both sides put on a play or playlet for the other side, and have the children guess which article of the Universal Declaration has been violated.

Build a Scene -- Using glue, with pebbles, sticks and whatever comes to hand, you could suggest that the children build little scenes showing places involved in guaranteeing human rights: schools, the law court, etc. Have the children think of scenes on their own, and see if the other children can guess what right is involved. If you have old crates or empty boxes, these make excellent settings for the scenes.

Do a Joint Mural -- Using different coloured little pieces of paper, glue, and a large flat surface, the children could make a mural depicting a scene involving human rights.

World Map -- On a world map, students could begin to record the information they have gathered from outside sources. They could record the countries from which their photographs have come. They should be

encouraged to seek out evidence of violation of human rights as well as fulfilment of human rights by actual examples from as many countries as possible.

Pictures - Stories - Photographs -- Have the students record in any way they like, an event or fact illustrating any single right from the Universal Declaration operating in their classroom, in their neighbourhood, or in the lives of their families. They might wish to do this by taking or clipping an appropriate photograph or by writing a little story or by drawing a picture. These could be shared by way of a bulletin board or having each student describe what he has recorded, which human right he is trying to illustrate, and why that seemed important to him.

Hold a Human Rights Fair -- All of these activities could be applied as well to the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. One special project which students might conduct on the basis of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child would be a human rights fair. Discuss the Declaration of the Rights of the Child with them and give them copies if it is possible to obtain enough for each child, using it perhaps as the basis of a reading lesson. Once they have gone over the Declaration, invite the children to express one right listed in any way each child would like to. They might work in teams to prepare their projects. These could include presenting a pantomime, writing a poem, drawing a picture. Any mode of expression is acceptable as long as it can be observed by the entire class and can form the basis of a shared experience.

Minority Rights and Racial Discrimination

Ask the students to describe specific examples of racial discrimination. Have them share experiences with this problem, asking them whether they have ever felt discrimination because of their race or religion or other personal characteristic. Have they ever seen any cases of racial discrimination? How did they feel when they experienced or observed racial discrimination? Would their school and their community be a better place if there were no longer any racial discrimination? How might they help to do away with this problem which the Secretary-General calls "a sickness"? Be sure that in the discussion of racial discrimination, you distinguish between discrimination by social custom and discrimination by law. In this way the students can understand that the case of apartheid is a serious and legitimate concern to the United Nations, whereas cases of social discrimination are not so easily identifiable and cannot be as readily denounced by the United Nations. In making that distinction, ask the students whether they think it feels any different to be the victim of discrimination if it is discrimination by custom or law. The point here is to help students understand that the human experience of discrimination is painful, no matter what the origin, but that when such discrimination

is legally enforced, those who suffer discrimination have less hope of improving their lot. Discuss how the Universal Declaration of Human Rights could form the basis for a new set of rules in the world and ask if they think the Declaration provides hope for the victims of discrimination and racism.

Heroes of Human Rights

The facts of racial discrimination can be discouraging so it is important to emphasize not only the hopeful potential of the Declaration of Human Rights, but also the actual accomplishments of individuals who have dedicated themselves to this cause. If there is a school bookshelf or library, help the students to select a book about someone who has tried to make life better for more people, preferably having each student read a different book to enrich the discussion. Have the students share the lives of these "heroes" and explain to each other how they actually helped to make life better for people whose rights had previously been violated. Then have them search in their own communities, through the mass media, and through their parents' conversation to see if they could nominate new heroes of human rights. Maybe there are heroes in their own town and in their own school. Ask them what makes a hero and if only heroes can help contribute to human rights or if everybody can. Try to see in how many ways they think they could be of help in making the Universal Declaration of Human Rights a reality in the world in which they live.

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Outlook on Human Rights

Human Rights Day 1973, celebrated on 10 December, marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption and proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the General Assembly of the United Nations. To commemorate this event, UNRWA has prepared a special issue of its Newsletter. This Newsletter relates the ideals expressed in two of the Declaration's Articles to work carried out by UNRWA for the Palestine refugees.

Ideals are abstract, but there is nothing abstract about the needs of the Palestine refugees, whose status as refugees, has affected their basic rights. Deprived of their homes and means of livelihood by their flight in 1948 and their inability to return, the refugees lacked shelter, food, clothing, and health and education facilities. They were in fact deprived of the adequate standard of living, the special care for motherhood and childhood and the education which Articles 25 and 26 of the Declaration state are the rights of all people everywhere.

To implement these rights, as well as to guarantee the survival of the refugees pending a just settlement of the refugee problem, UNRWA has since 1950 operated relief, health and education services for needy refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Gaza Strip.

Today UNRWA provides assistance in various forms for over 1.3 million of the more than 1.5 million registered refugees. Some 38 per cent of the refugees live in camps. While these camps are not extra-territorial sites and UNRWA has no civil authority over them, the Agency does work to improve living conditions in them. Under a wider mandate from the General Assembly of the United Nations, UNRWA has also given aid to many of the hundreds of thousands of persons displaced as a result of the 1967 Middle East hostilities.

UNRWA's assistance depends on voluntary contributions from the governments, non-governmental organizations, business corporations and individuals who support the Agency's efforts on behalf of the refugees. Now, however, because of devaluation of the U.S. dollar and inflation, UNRWA's programmes are seriously threatened by budget deficits estimated at over $3 million in 1973 and over $10 million in 1974.

If additional contributions to cover these deficits are not quickly forthcoming, the rights of the refugees as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will again be placed in jeopardy. The further denial of human rights to the Palestine refugees as the result of a cut-back in UNRWA's basic services would cause more hardship, frustration and bitterness, would wreck the hopes of a better future for many thousands of young refugees and would heighten tension and encourage further violence in the Middle East. No government, no person, concerned with human rights can afford to allow such a situation to occur.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION of HUMAN RIGHTS

PREAMBLE

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore,

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

proclaims

THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any descrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11. (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14. (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15. (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16. (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17. (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21. (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23. (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25. (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26. (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27. (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28. Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29. (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

The Right to Education

In the 25 years since the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations organs and specialized agencies have been dedicated to the support of these basic rights. The necessity of ensuring these rights is particularly important in the Near East, where large numbers of refugees began fleeing Palestine early in 1948 as the British mandate was coming to an end there.

The sudden arrival of these refugees in the Arab host countries created urgent relief problems. Most of the refugees had fled without anything but the clothes they were wearing, and they had taken refuge wherever shelter was available, sometimes in caves and deserted buildings, sometimes in make-shift tents. At first, voluntary agencies supplied emergency aid to the refugees. Shortly afterwards, the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees (UNRPR) was established to provide food, clothing, shelter and health facilities.

Of major importance was the refugees' right to education, as set forth in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the first schools in the newly-formed refugee camps were opened by UNRPR. Classes were held in the open or in tents, usually without desks, blackboards, books or pencils. There were some schoolmasters among the refugees, but often UNRPR had to rely on the voluntary services of unqualified teachers.

Despite these problems, by the end of August 1949, UNRPR - with substantial Unesco aid and the operational assistance of voluntary agencies - had set up 39 schools with an enrolment of more than 21,000 children. The importance of the education programme, especially vocational training, was stressed in the December 1949 Report of the United Nations Economic Survey Mission for the Middle East, on the basis of which UNRWA was formed.

The Survey Mission recommended that "the young people of the Middle East" should be given "the opportunity to become skilled technicians of all kinds, both by education abroad and by the expansion of

1948: The first classes were held in the open air.

Refugee children are eager to learn. UNRWA/Unesco elementary schools provide six years of education for over 200,000 children.

opportunity at home," It urged that a way be found at once to start developments in the Middle East which would "offer work to all who have none, and, by that natural means, lay the foundation of stability and peace." Education and training were recognized as the means of equipping the young refugees for employment and economic independence.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

UNRWA succeeded UNRPR on 1 May 1950, and in August of that year UNRWA made an agreement with Unesco, ensuring the continuance of Unesco's aid in the education programme. Unesco, responsible for the professional side of the programme, would undertake school inspection, choose curricula, books and other school materials, and would make available its extensive experience in mass communications, audio-visual techniques and textbook research. UNRWA, responsible for finance and administration, would run the schools, purchase and distribute equipment, train and pay teachers, improve existing schools and build new ones.

On the basis of this co-operation, UNRWA began to develop the programme started by UNRPR. Recognizing that, were funds available, the education programme "could be tremendously expanded with beneficial results in raised morale and more useful citizens when the present refugee children reach maturity", UNRWA established a regular education budget.

The refugees' response to UNRWA's elementary education programme, for grades one to six, was overwhelming. Between the end of 1950 and November 1954, the number of schools had risen from 74 to 242, and the number of teachers had tripled from 700 to 2,167, as a result of an increased enrolment from 35,700 to 154,735 in June 1954, including refugee pupils subsidized by UNRWA in government and private schools. By 1973 elementary enrolment had risen to 201,852.

FURTHER EDUCATION

Despite financial limitations, the elementary education system met reasonably well the needs of the refugee community

at that time. It was evident, however, that the Agency would have to establish a preparatory education programme, for the seventh to ninth grades, mainly because many refugees lived in areas (e.g. the Gaza Strip and the Jordan valley) where government or private preparatory schools were either scarce or non-existent.

At first, for budgetary reasons, the Agency attempted to limit preparatory-cycle intake to a small percentage of the elementary school population in each country. A few classes were opened in 1952/53 in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, with an enrolment of about two per cent of the total elementary school population. By 1960 enrolment had climbed to 20 per cent (20,651 pupils) of the elementary school population; and in that year the principle of preparatory education for all pupils capable of benefiting from it was accepted. Subject to certain conditions, when eligible students are not able to enrol in UNRWA/Unesco preparatory schools, UNRWA provides assistance in the form of grants or book allowances for these pupils if they attend government or private schools. In May of 1973 there were 70,339 students in the preparatory cycle; 58,255 in UNRWA/Unesco schools and 12,084 in government or private schools.

Although UNRWA initiated secondary school classes for grades 10 through 12 in 1953/54, it was soon forced to terminate the programme for financial reasons. But it provides book allowances or grants for eligible students who pass the Preparatory State Certificate Examination and who are admitted to government and private secondary schools. In May 1973 there were 21,403 refugee students enrolled in these schools.

Learning to count.

Since UNRWA's inception it has maintained a small scholarship programme for refugee students in universities and institutions of higher learning in the Middle East. Although funds for this purpose have also been limited, establishment of the programme was important, particularly in view of the shortage at the time of qualified professional young men and women, particularly in technical fields, in the Middle East.

Initially the programme was restricted to the American University and St. Joseph University in Beirut in Lebanon and to the University of Damascus in Syria. Since 1953, other universities in Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia have been added. From the 90 UNRWA university scholarships awarded in 1950, the number of awards increased to an all-time high of 1,244 in 1968/69, when a special contribution from the Federal German Government made additional scholarships available. Most awards are in the fields of medicine, engineering and science, which provide good opportunities for employment after graduation.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The December 1949 Report of the Survey Mission had stressed the need for educating the refugees in technical skills that would equip them for future employment. It was evident that craftsmen and technicians trained at a higher level than generally found in the Middle East would be in a stronger position to compete for jobs.

With this in mind, UNRWA carried on the vocational training programme initiated by UNRPR. By May 1950, 19 refugee teachers were already training 270 pupils in 15 small centres as carpenters, shoe-

makers, tinsmiths and stone masons. In addition, 22 sewing centres were set up, in which refugee women and girls worked and received training.

From these small beginnings, the vocational training programme has developed and become a major part of UNRWA's education service to the refugees. Over the years the programme has been modified and improved in accord with local economic needs and the refugees' situation, and there has been a rise in the level of instruction.

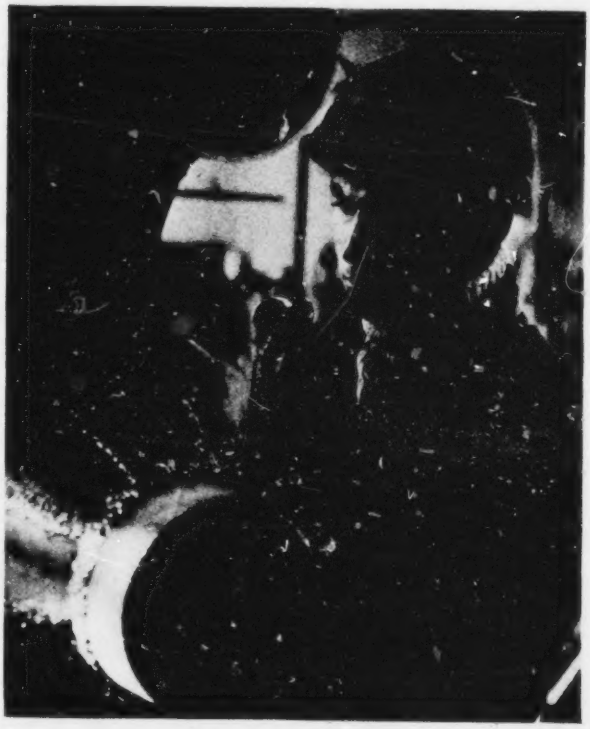
On the basis of General Assembly resolution 513(VI) of 26 January 1952, plans were made for the immediate inauguration of a new $5-million programme for technical and vocational training. This included provision for agricultural training, commercial courses and teacher training, as well as a wide range of technical courses, in new training centres.

The programme had three additional objectives: to train future instructors; to re-train artisans whose skills had deteriorated because of unemployment; and to provide facilities for trade testing that would enable employers seeking skilled workmen to determine whether applicants were qualified for the jobs.

The first of the new centres was opened in December 1953 at Kalandia, near Jerusalem. With 127 students, this residential centre trained young men in the building, mechanical and electrical trades. In 1954 a non-residential centre was opened in Gaza. The 1954 Special Report to the General Assembly, from the UNRWA Director (now Commissioner-General) and the Advisory Commission, expressed the hope that vocational training would result "in the new generation of refugees being better equipped to earn their living and become self-supporting."

The importance of vocational training was further underlined by an estimate at that time that half of the refugees registered with the Agency were under 15 years of age. Most of these young people had not had the opportunity to acquire the back-

UNRWA/Unesco centres offer 3,000 places for vocational and technical education courses.



ground which would qualify them for higher scholastic education. The refugees themselves soon realized that with vocational training they could improve their chances of obtaining jobs. In addition, vocational training could enable them to contribute to the expansion of the economies of the host countries over the next 10 to 20 years.

UNRWA's vocational training programme, at that time a relatively new development in the Arab world, thus helped to meet the demand for greater skills and higher standards in this era of economic growth. A major expansion of the programme was made possible by a $4.5-million allocation of funds from appeals made in 1960 during World Refugee Year. Subsequently, special contributions for vocational training have been received from the Governments of Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States. Today over 3,000 places are available for young men and women in vocational and technical education courses in UNRWA/Unesco centres, with qualified

Carpentry trainees at Damascus Vocational Training Centre. UNRWA/Unesco centres offer young refugee men and women instruction in a wide variety of trades.

applicants competing for the places. To be eligible for vocational training, which includes instruction in trades such as metal-working and automobile repair, a refugee student must have completed his preparatory education. To be eligible for training in technical courses, such as those for architectural draftsmen and laboratory technicians, a student must have completed his secondary education.

TEACHER TRAINING

UNRWA's present education system has gradually evolved out of the first classes 25 years ago, when many of the teachers were unqualified. At the end of 1950, for example, of over 800 teachers, only 175 had completed 10 years of schooling. The majority had received only elementary education, and others had had only an additional year of preparatory education. To meet the need for better-trained teachers, the Agency initiated the first of its teacher-training programmes with summer courses in 1952. Regular courses to train teachers for the elementary cycle were inaugurated in 1956/57 with two pilot training centres in Jordan.

In 1960, thanks to the World Refugee Year contribution, UNRWA built a men's teacher training centre in Ramallah. It was followed by construction of Ramallah Women's Training Centre, which, with a capacity of 300 vocational trainees and 300 teacher trainees, was the first residential establishment for women on such a scale in the Arab world.

Then in 1969 the Vocational Training Centre at Siblin in Lebanon (opened in 1962) combined with the Siblin Technical and Teacher Training Institute (opened in 1963) to become the Siblin Training Centre, with places for 500 vocational trainees and 160 teacher trainees. With the official opening in October 1972 of the Amman Training Centre for both men and women, the UNRWA training programme can now offer places to 1,250 pre-service teacher trainees annually. Since the inception of the training programmes, more than 5,000 teachers have graduated. Many of these trained teachers find employment in government and private schools in the Middle East, often after gaining experience in UNRWA/Unesco schools.

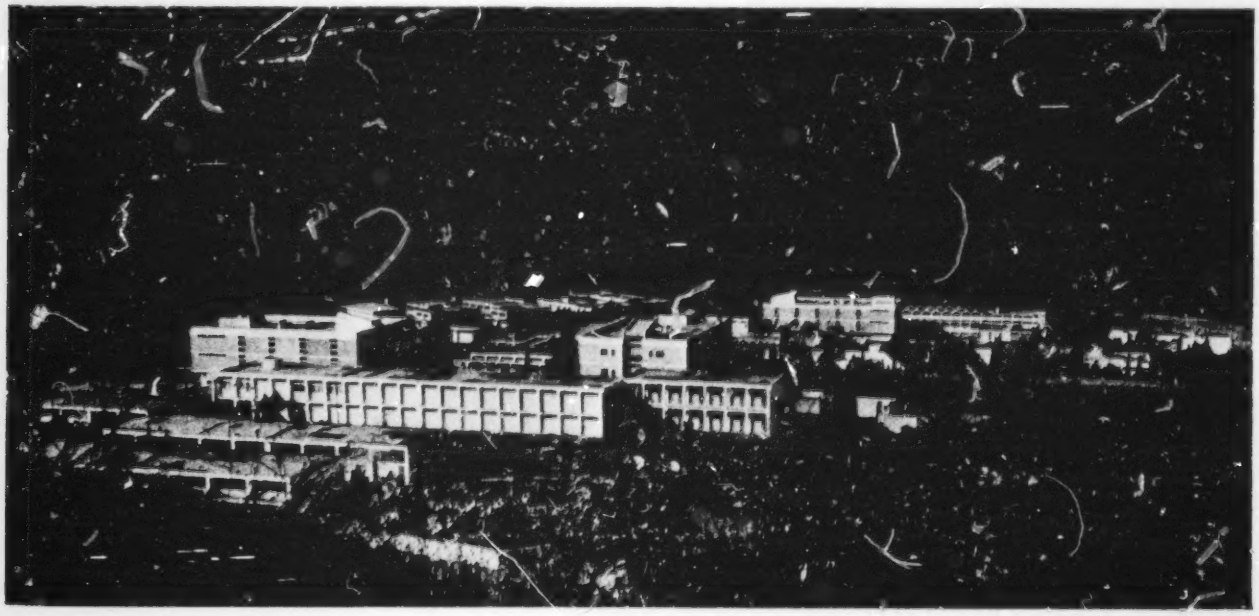
A significant development in the programme was the introduction in October 1964 of in-service training for teachers, with the establishment of the UNRWA/Unesco Institute of Education in Beirut. The first phase of in-service training was designed to give professional teaching qualifications to serving teachers, most of whom only possessed academic qualifications; to provide refresher courses for those already professionally qualified; and to revitalise teaching methods. A later phase has extended special courses to subject teachers, headmasters, school supervisors and teacher-training instructors. There is emphasis on the replacement of the traditional rote learning by new techniques, including the use of films, recordings and other teaching aids aimed at arousing a child's interest and curiosity.

CONSTANT DIFFICULTIES

Since its inception, UNRWA has been beset by political and financial difficulties that have threatened its programmes of assistance to the refugees.

Each new outbreak of fighting has added to the problem of maintaining these services. The renewal of Arab/Israeli hostilities in June 1967, for example, obliged the Agency to provide emergency shelter in its schools in Syria and east Jordan for thousands of refugees and other persons displaced from territories occupied by Israel. Major adjustments in the education programme were necessary to cope with the situation. The sudden influx required that tented schools be set up in emergency camps, while existing school buildings were put on a double-shift basis. Even after hostilities had ceased, many of the Agency's teaching staff had trouble in returning to their place of work. This caused understaffing in Agency schools and training centres for some months and made the 1967/68 school year a particularly trying one. As a further result of the hostilities, the displacement of refugees interrupted the normal increase in school enrolment in 1967 and 1968. Consequently, in 1969 there was a sudden large increase in enrolment that placed a severe strain on the Agency's schools. Successive disturbances in the area have, at one time or another, caused suspension of classes, destruction of facilities, and other difficulties for the education programme.

Today there are over one-and-a-half million Palestine refugees registered with



Siblin Training Centre, Lebanon, has places for 660 refugee students in vocational and teacher training courses.

UNRWA, many of whom have been uprooted more than once in the past quarter of a century. Because of the natural growth of this refugee population, 12,000 new pupils enrol in UNRWA's schools annually. To accommodate this increase normally would require the building of 240 to 250 new classrooms each year. Over the past five years the Agency has built 851 classrooms and 135 ancillary school rooms, but UNRWA's resources are not adequate to fund the construction programme that is needed, with the result that double-shifting in schools has been resorted to extensively. Now that there is double-shifting in 57 per cent of UNRWA/Unesco schools - and since triple-shifting is simply impractical - a large, annual programme of construction cannot be avoided, despite its financial implications, if children are not to be turned away.

The construction of new classrooms has been a major priority for the Agency since it first began providing education for refugees. As hope of early return of the refugees faded, it was realised that the temporary tent classrooms set up by UNRPR were expensive and easily damaged or destroyed, and a decision was made to replace them by more solid, mud-brick buildings. These first buildings were mainly long, narrow and dark and still basically unsuitable. They were soon overcrowded and, in at least one instance in 1951, there was one classroom with 152 pupils. The overcrowding resulted in double-shifting and led to a reduction in the number of hours of education for an individual student.

In September 1952 the UNRWA Director (now Commissioner-General), in agreement with the Advisory Commission, authorized the limiting of classes to not more than 50 pupils. It was also decided to build more permanent schools and provide for additional space for girl students. (In 1952 only 23 per cent of elementary school pupils were girls; today the figure is 48 per cent.) Consequently, by the end of 1952 the education budget had doubled from $615,000 to $1,221,550. By 1973, it had risen to over $29 million.

In a budget entirely financed by voluntary

A teacher trainee at the recently-opened Amman Training Centre.

contributions from governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and individuals, the matching of increased expenditure by increased income cannot be easily assured. While the Agency receives more than one-quarter of its income in the form of food commodities for distribution to the refugees, it needs cash income for the education programme. It is inevitably this programme, therefore, that is threatened with cuts in times of financial crises.

In 1973, the Agency's financial position has been particularly hurt by the devaluation of the U.S. dollar and inflation. Because of these factors, UNRWA's estimated budget deficit for 1973 increased to over $3 million, and the deficit for 1974 is now estimated at more than $10 million. If these deficits are not covered by increased contributions, a serious and immediate threat is posed to the UNRWA/Unesco education programme.

In January 1971, Mr. René Maheu, Director-General of Unesco, launched an appeal for

greater financial support for education of the Palestine refugees.

In making this appeal he said: "For over 20 years Unesco has been associated with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees(UNRWA) in order to provide these refugees with the education to which they have a right and thus equip them intellectually and morally to assume their basic human dignity and freedom despite the adverse circumstances in which they are fated to live.

"This action, which began without resources or adequate preparation, has developed and become progressively better organized and equipped until, despite the continued precariousness of the refugees' position and of the status of the Agency itself and despite a psychological atmosphere continually upset by violence, it has become the most ambitious educational undertaking under international administration. Even in territories occupied as a result of the events of June 1967, this action continues in circumstances as near normal as possible."

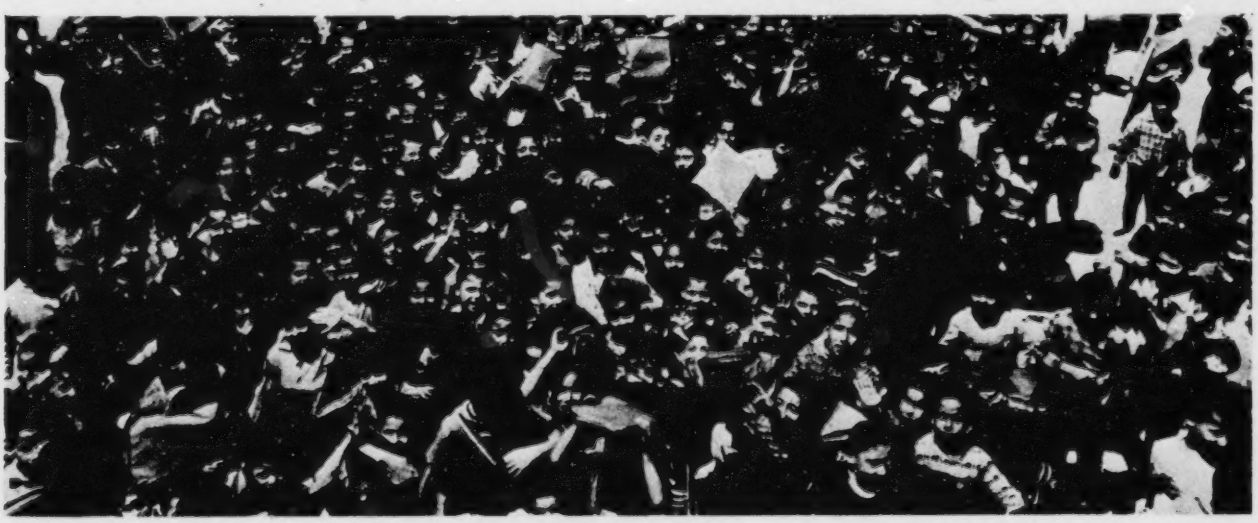
He noted that: "In terms of number the percentage of Palestine refugees receiving education is among the highest in the Arab countries, while from the point of view of quality a constant improvement has been noted thanks in particular to the systematic effort which has been made to train teachers, almost all Palestinians..."

He warned that "the continuation of this humanitarian work, a signal example of international cooperation, is endangered by the precariousness and insufficiency of the resources available to UNRWA as the Agency responsible for financing the project."

He went on to say: "Human rights are a universal cause and no one could possibly remain indifferent and inactive in the face of the derelictions or violations of which they are, alas, the subject in so many ways and so many places throughout the world. We must react before it is too late."

And he concluded by saying: "The cause is that of the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind against which neither hatred nor unreason can prevail."

It would indeed be a tragedy if this vital work,which has prevented the young Palestine refugees from being further handicapped by lack of general education and which through vocational training has given increased opportunities to thousands of them to become self-supporting and to support parents and brothers and sisters, were interrupted through lack of funds.



Each year 12,000 new pupils enrol in UNRWA/Unesco schools. Expenditure on education now absorbs 48 per cent of the Agency's annual budget. Due to the Agency's financial difficulties, education services may have to be reduced in 1974.

In 1972 Ahmad Naufal graduated from a land surveyor course at Wadi Seer Training Centre. He is now working on a railway project in east Jordan.

AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING

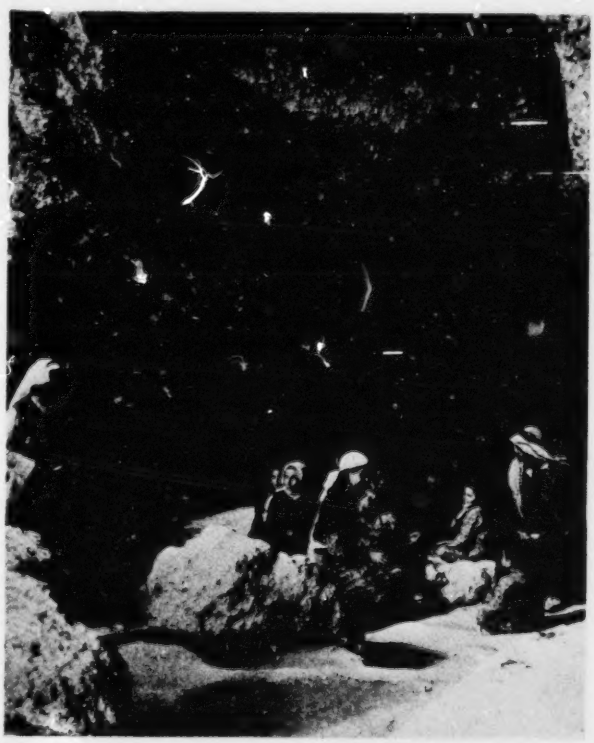
The right of each person to "a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family", as proclaimed in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is an ideal which means different things in different societies. For the refugees who fled Palestine in 1948 and took refuge in the neighbouring Arab countries, however, their new living conditions were far from adequate, much less ideal.

Many had been farmers and, deprived of house and land, they were no longer able to feed or support themselves or their families. Most arrived in the host countries with only the clothing on their backs and the small amount of personal belongings they could carry. When they first found shelter, it was usually in school buildings, mosques, tents and sometimes in caves. The tents were overcrowded and offered little protection from the cold of winter or the oppressive summer heat. The mud caused by winter rains and snows added to the refugees' misery. Lacking adequate sanitation facilities, some 60 "camps" formed by large agglomerations of the refugees threatened to become breeding grounds for epidemics of diseases common to the Middle East.

It was this grave situation to which the international community responded, first with the efforts of voluntary organizations and the UNRPR and then with the formation of UNRWA. The initial task was to assure the survival of the refugees, by providing them with food, clothing, shelter and medical treatment. Once survival had been guaranteed however, it became apparent that, with no political settlement in sight, longer term programmes would have to be established in order to improve living conditions, which were for the most part wretched. The immediate crisis had passed, but the refugees still needed food, better shelter and clothing, education, improved sanitation facilities and health care. To help satisfy these undeniable needs, over the past 23 years UNRWA has developed its wide-ranging health, education, relief and welfare programmes.

FOOD FOR THE REFUGEES

Feeding the refugees was not simply a matter of finding the funds or food. It was also the transportation and distribu-



1948 : The first refugees took shelter in caves.

Nahr el-Bared, Lebanon, in 1952. This camp then sheltered some 9,000 refugees in tents.

tion of foodstuffs to hundreds of thousands of persons, scattered after their flight to Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and Jordan (both east Jordan and the West Bank), in a climate where shade temperature can reach 120° F (48.8°C) in the summer months. Today, more than 500,000 miles of road have to be travelled by UNRWA trucks each month to transport the supplies to distribution centres UNRWA has set up in the towns, villages and camps in the five fields of the Agency's operations. Because most of the food is donated in kind and must therefore be shipped to the Middle East, foods which can be easily stored in bulk, such as flour, sugar, rice and edible oil, are preferred.

These foods make up a basic ration which provides about 1,500 calories a day in summer, and 1,600 calories a day during the five winter months when extra flour is distributed, for each ration recipient (100% of the registered refugee population in 1950; only 54% today receive rations). Containing no fresh food or animal protein, the basic ration does not provide a balanced or complete diet. To remain healthy, the refugees who are given rations must supplement them with a little meat, cheese, eggs, vegetables and fruits - either grown by themselves, bartered for part of their rations or bought with their earnings.

Also, UNRWA helps to improve the refugees' diet with a supplementary feeding programme, which includes daily distribution of hot meals, vitamins and reconstituted milk powder and monthly distribution of extra rations. The programme gives added nutrition to special groups of refugees, such as children, pregnant and nursing women, some ailing adults, and refugees displaced in 1967 - especially those still accommodated in the emergency camps in east Jordan and Syria.

Although these programmes do not provide for all the nutritional needs of the refugees - from the early days of the Agency's operations budgetary limitations forced the placing of ceilings on the number of rations that could be issued - nevertheless the nutritional state of the

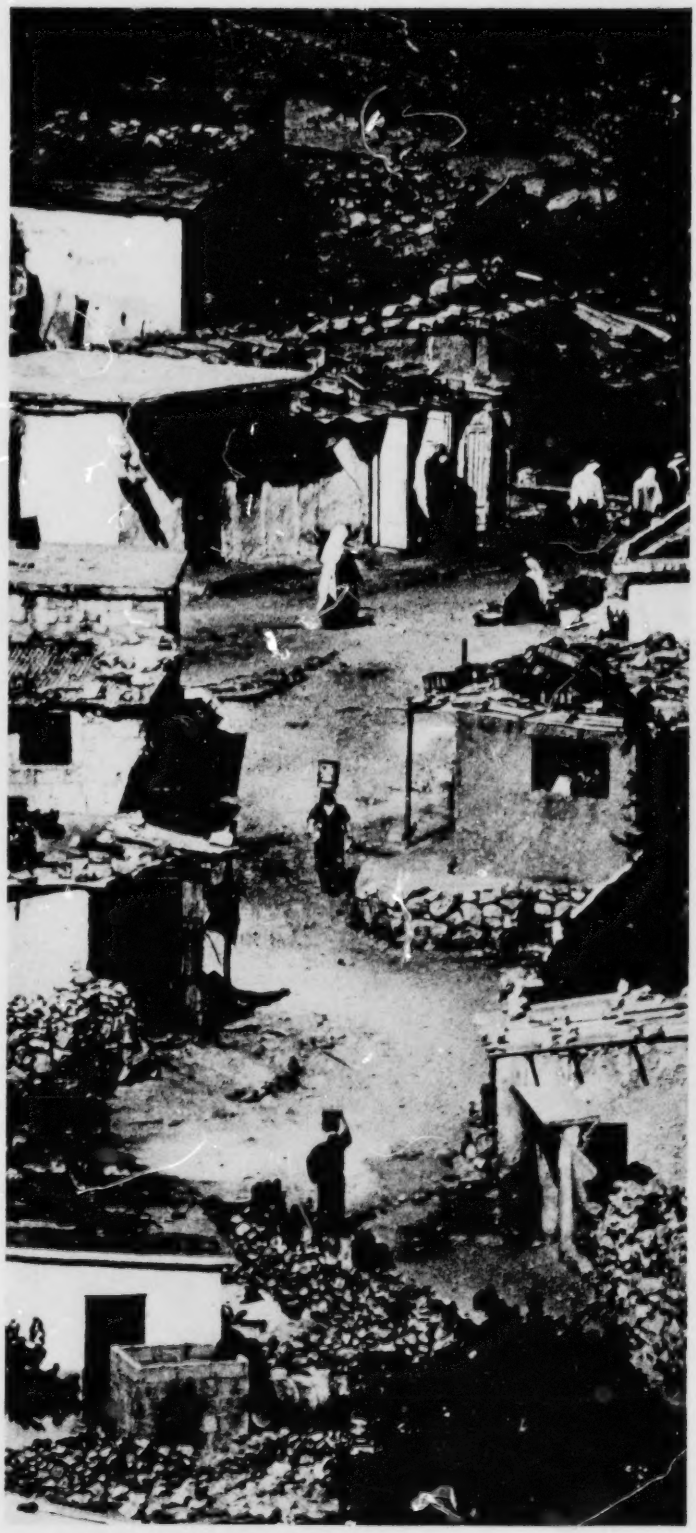
refugee population has been satisfactorily maintained.

SHELTER

The majority of the refugees live outside camps and have found accommodation in apartments and houses in the villages, towns and cities of the Middle East. But 38 per cent (644,093) of the refugees reside in camps. The camps, which are not extra-territorial areas and over which UNRWA has no civil authority, differ markedly. Some, like Mar Elias in Lebanon, are the size of a small village with 400 or so inhabitants. Others, like Rafah in the Gaza Strip with a population of over 45,000, are virtually towns in themselves. Common to all the camps, however, are the installations for providing services for the refugees, either built or rented by UNRWA. These include one or more schools, centres for supplementary feeding and the distribution of milk and rations and a clinic with a doctor in daily attendance.

In the 53 long-established camps, concrete-block or mud-brick shelters have been built by UNRWA or by the refugees themselves, usually with help in the form of building materials or financial aid from the Agency. Consequently, by 1959 all the tents in these camps had been replaced with shelters, which generally consist of one or two rooms and perhaps a cooking area, in many cases surrounded by a compound wall for privacy. While sanitation facilities are often shared by several families, more and more of these homes have private latrines and a water tap. In all fields of the Agency's operations, UNRWA's environmental sanitation programme in the camps ensures provision of public latrines and potable water, the removal of waste water, and the control of public baths and slaughter houses.

In June 1967, the renewal of Arab/Israeli hostilities caused hundreds of thousands of refugees and other persons to be displaced. For the second time many found themselves with no place to live and, consequently, 10 emergency camps were established in Syria and east Jordan.



1973 : Dheisheh, Bethlehem. Here as elsewhere, tents in pre-1967 camps have long been replaced by concrete shelters.

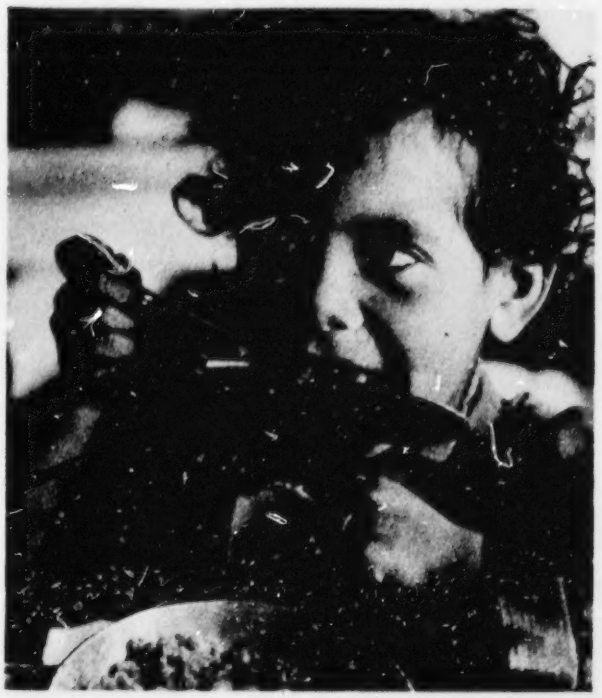
With little response to the General Assembly's repeated calls for the return "without delay" of those displaced since the outbreak of hostilities, once more the Agency had the task of replacing tents with shelters, of turning mud pathways into suitable streets, of building schools and clinics where none existed. For the most part, UNRWA has been able to replace the tents in these emergency camps with more solid shelter, thanks to special donations. However, as in the 53 camps which were established before the 1967 hostilities, there is still much to be done.

SELF-HELP ACTIVITY

Part of what has been already done has been accomplished by the refugees themselves. Over the years, the refugees have shown that, within their very limited means, they eagerly work for improvements in their own circumstances. Consequently, with UNRWA's advice and encouragement, self-help projects have enabled the refugees to build, for example, extra rooms on their shelters, to pave over dirt pathways and to construct recreational facilities.

Quantities of flour, sugar, rice and edible oil are the basic rations distributed monthly to over 820,000 registered refugees.

40,000 beneficiaries, mainly young children, daily receive a hot meal under UNRWA's supplementary feeding programme.



Particularly during the past two years the number of self-help projects has noticeably increased. On the West Bank, for example, some 10 self-help projects with UNRWA participation are under way or nearing completion. These projects include the construction of a youth activities centre at Dheisheh Camp, the levelling and surfacing with concrete of school playgrounds and extensions of basketball courts. Other improvements have been made by adding extra rooms to shelters and schools.

HEALTH CARE

Despite the crowded conditions in the refugee camps and the difficulty of maintaining proper sanitation facilities, there has never been a major epidemic of the more serious diseases among the refugees since UNRWA became responsible for their health. Killers such as cholera, diphtheria and polio have been held at bay because of the Agency's inoculation programmes. The threat of death from diarrhoeal diseases, which can dehydrate and kill an infant in a matter of hours,

has been greatly reduced because of treatment at UNRWA's 22 rehydration/nutrition centres. Highly infectious eye diseases like trachoma, which can result in blindness, have been brought under control through the constant attention annually given more than a quarter of a million children in the school health programmes and provided for more than 1.3 million refugees at UNRWA's health centres. Like the teachers in the schools, the medical staff of these centres is almost entirely composed of Palestine refugees, trained to assist in maintaining the health of the refugee community as a whole.

UNRWA, with the technical assistance of the World Health Organization (WHO), has developed comprehensive health programmes over the years, concentrating on prevention of disease as much as on emergency curative measures. For it is prevention, whether through health education programmes, mass immunization, and improvement of the diet or sanitary conditions, that can continue to keep the danger of widespread illness in check. And, within the Agency's resources, which presently allow for only 13 per cent of the budget to be spent on health services, prevention of disease is facilitated by assuring the refugees an adequate standard of living.

WELFARE

Part of the task of maintaining an adequate standard of living falls on UNRWA's welfare programme. This programme relates to that part of the Universal Declaration which refers to "the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood" in circumstances beyond the individual's control.

UNRWA case workers work with especially needy refugees - the handicapped, the chronically ill, widows with minor children and the aged - and other refugees with special problems, and try to help them with counselling and financial assistance. However, budgetary limitations hinder the development of these activities, and at present only a very small part of the real need can be met.

A consultation at the out-patient clinic in Jaramana Camp, Syria.

During the past year, some 22,474 persons were given special hardship assistance under the case work programme. These received very small cash grants (from $4 to $8). Others among the most needy refugees received special issues of blankets, kerosene and used clothing.

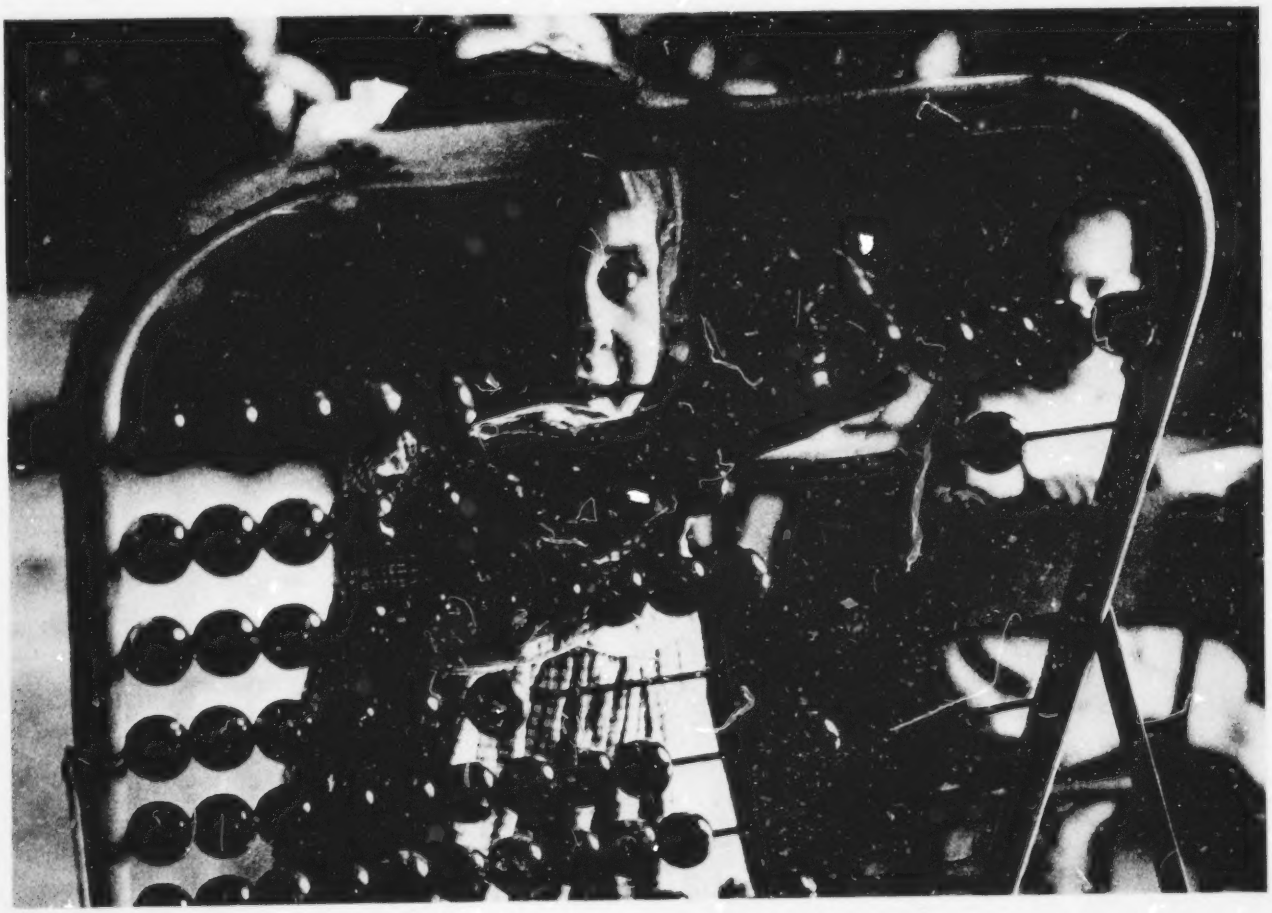
There are also education and training facilities to help blind, deaf or crippled refugee children. As far as funds will allow, UNRWA places these handicapped children in institutions, where they can be educated and trained. Blind children and adults in the Gaza Strip receive training at the Centre for the Blind in Gaza which is run by UNRWA and financed by the Pontifical Mission for Palestine.

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS

UNRWA has done everything possible, within its very limited means, to improve the refugees' standard of living. This year, for example, in Qabr Essit (Syria) 500 concrete block shelters were constructed

to house refugees who had been displaced and living in tents because of the 1967 Arab/Israeli hostilities. Also in Syria, a new clinic was completed in Jaramana camp and the construction of two other clinics (in Sbeineh and Qabr Essit) was approved and will be finished shortly. In east Jordan a number of new access roads and pathways in camps were constructed and existing ones were improved. Drainage and sanitary facilities in the camps were also upgraded. Pre-fabricated classrooms were erected in three camps, and there are plans for more to be built during the year.

Together with projects undertaken or financed by the refugees themselves, the recently completed projects illustrate the determination of UNRWA and the refugees to raise the refugees' standard of living and improve their outlook for the future.



Financed by voluntary agencies, play centres give 4,000 pre-school age children the opportunity to learn while they play.

Motherhood and Childhood

A birth is always a special event and usually a time for celebration. Each birth also creates new responsibilities for both the family and its society. One of these responsibilities is the protection of mothers before and immediately after childbirth and of infants and young children during the period when both mother and child are particularly vulnerable to illness and injury. In Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the "special care and assistance" needed during motherhood and childhood is proclaimed as a right. To make this right a reality for the mothers and children among the 1.5 million Palestine refugees now registered with UNRWA in the Middle East, UNRWA, with the help of WHO, has developed since 1950 an extensive health programme.

The often harsh, overcrowded living conditions of the refugees, particularly among the over 644,000 who dwell in the 63 camps in Lebanon, Syria, east Jordan, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, create problems for mothers and young children that make such "special care" imperative.

In areas where there is only one doctor for several thousands of refugees, respiratory infections become a major killer and measles can frequently be fatal. Because of inadequate hygiene and sanitation, infants are especially exposed to gastro-enteritis with its accompanying dehydration, leading frequently to malnutrition or death. The threats of typhoid and cholera are ever-present. Trachoma, a disease often spread by unclean hands and by flies, may lead to blindness.

Early smallpox vaccination is a part of UNRWA's immunization programme.

Superstition and lack of education among the mothers add to the hazards which imperil both mother and baby. And the basic diet may be inadequate to prevent malnutrition, which can lead to permanently harmful effects.

To cope with these and other health problems, a major part of UNRWA's health programme, which serves 1.3 million of the refugees, is devoted to the care of mothers and children. In particular, through 79 of its own health centres and three subsidized voluntary agency centres, UNRWA provides maternal care for refugee mothers, health supervision for infants and pre-school children and health education for both mothers and children. In its 546 schools, UNRWA also looks after the health of more than a quarter of a million refugee children.

PRE-NATAL CARE

The special care begins during the third or fourth month of pregnancy, when most expectant refugee mothers register for pre-natal care. The nearly 30,000 women who received this care during 1973 were given on registration a thorough medical examination, including serological and haemoglobin tests. A standard procedure in good pre-natal care, haemoglobin testing is especially important for the women of needy refugee families whose diet leaves them particularly prone to develop anaemia.

The basic ration which UNRWA provides for approximately 829,000 refugees consists of flour, sugar, rice and edible oil. This diet of only 1,500 calories during the warmer months and 1,600 calories during winter does not include the fresh fruits and vegetables and the protein-rich foods so important for all persons, and especially for child-bearing women. To help compensate for this lack, UNRWA gives extra dry rations and skim milk to refugee women during pregnancy and for

Dayahs receiving instruction.

one year after childbirth. To prevent or correct iron deficiency, refugee women are also issued special iron and vitamin pills during pregnancy and for six months following childbirth.

Of equal importance during this critical period is health education for expectant mothers, because their difficult environment combined with inadequate personal hygiene makes exposure to disease a major threat to their well-being. Consequently, during their regular monthly visits to UNRWA's health centres, expectant mothers are taught how to care for themselves during pregnancy and to prepare for delivery under these conditions. After childbirth, mothers are given additional advice on infant care and hygiene.

CHILDBIRTH

The normal practice in the region of giving birth in the home, with attendance by only a dayah (traditional midwife), makes childbirth particularly hazardous under the conditions in the refugee camps. Refugee women usually bear their babies in the spartan surroundings of a small shelter often crowded with other members of the family. Many of their homes have only one or two rooms, often no private latrine and usually not even a water tap. With the shelters packed closely together in camps which have come to resemble the poorer areas of large cities, it is difficult to maintain the sanitary conditions desirable for the health of mother and child.

Although UNRWA recognizes these problems, it does not have the finances or facilities to provide delivery in a maternity centre or hospital for most refugee mothers. Some delivery facilities are provided in UNRWA maternity centres in areas such as the Gaza Strip where home delivery, because of exceptionally crowded and unhygienic conditions, may be especially difficult and hazardous. And hospital delivery is reserved by the Agency only for those refugee women who either have or are at risk of developing complications. While approximately 14 per cent of refugee babies are now born in UNRWA maternity centres and 20 per cent in hospitals, 66 per cent are still delivered in the refugees' homes.

Birth in an UNRWA centre.

In home deliveries, the refugee women are mostly attended by Agency dayahs, many of whom are still without training and lack a sound knowledge of proper hygiene. Nevertheless, the dayahs perform a valuable service in the absence of professional attention and, most important of all, are able to recognize complications and send for assistance if needed.

The practice of the dayah is often hereditary and elderly dayahs often do not take easily to new working methods. But UNRWA, recognising the importance of the dayahs, provides instruction for them in the principles of hygiene and more modern delivery techniques. Dayahs who work according to UNRWA's instructions are issued with masks, gowns and midwifery kits by the Agency. They are responsible for reporting each birth and they are supervised by UNRWA's nursing staff.

Mothers bring their babies to infant health clinics for monthly examination.

POST-NATAL CARE

Following the birth of a refugee baby, the dayah, or sometimes an UNRWA staff nurse from a health centre, pays daily visits for the first 10 days to make sure mother and child are doing well. Then the mother is advised to bring her baby to one of UNRWA's infant health clinics to be registered for regular health care.

Through the health centres, with the valuable assistance in kind and in cash of a dozen different organizations and voluntary groups, mothers are issued a baby blanket and a piece of soap for each of their newborn infants. In addition, layettes are supplied to multiple-birth and premature infants and to all newborn infants in the emergency camps in east Jordan and Syria. The latter also receive an extra woollen blanket during the winter months; and in all its fields of operation UNRWA also distributes layettes to special hardship cases.

At the infant health clinics the babies are given a thorough inspection by a staff nurse or examination by a doctor and are enrolled in a programme of regular visits which extend through the first three years of their lives.

Here again health education plays a valuable role by informing mothers of the need to immunize their babies against certain diseases to which children are particularly susceptible and by impressing on them the necessity of nutritional supervision and of immediate treatment in case of illness. This is especially important in helping to protect their children against the gastro-intestinal infections which are rife in the Middle East and which constitute a considerable health hazard for infants and young children.

Unfortunately, immunization against most gastro-intestinal infections does not yet exist and general preventive measures are all-important. These consist of educating

the mother in the proper feeding and hygienic care of her child. For those infants who contract these infections, however, UNRWA has established 22 special day-care centres known as rehydration/nutrition centres. With accommodation for 243 infants, these centres are an innovation in the Middle East. Equally important, they serve for the restoration of nutrition in malnourished infants.

At the centres, dehydrated babies are given anti-diarrhoeal drugs, and their body fluids and minerals are replaced through a stomach tube. They, as well as malnutrition cases, are fed a high-protein, high-calorie diet. On discharge from the rehydration/nutrition centres, the convalescing children continue on this special diet which is served in UNRWA's supplementary feeding centres. Both types of centres thus play a vital role in preserving the lives of refugee infants suffering from gastro-enteritis with dehydration or from malnutrition.

There are many other diseases which threaten the health of refugee children and which can prove fatal in the early years of life. To protect the infants from certain of the preventable childhood diseases, UNRWA maintains a comprehensive immunization programme. Immunization begins at about one month of age with BCG vaccination against tuberculosis. During their first year, children are also vaccinated against diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, poliomyelitis, typhoid and paratyphoid; measles, when adequate supplies of anti-measles vaccine are available; and smallpox. During their second and third years, they receive the necessary booster doses of vaccines.

This immunization programme has effectively contributed to the steady decline in these diseases. Between 1966 and 1970, for example, the rate of tuberculosis among the refugees was halved, and the BCG vaccination programme is playing an increasing role in preventing new cases. In 1970 a 40 per cent drop in the number of measles cases among refugee children corresponded with UNRWA's first extensive measles-immunization programme,

Suffering from severe dehydration, this refugee baby is given intra-nasal drip treatment in the rehydration/nutrition centre which forms part of the UNRWA/Swedish Health Centre in the Gaza Strip.

and the decline is continuing in step with the extent of immunization coverage.

Similarly, the incidence of trachoma has been dramatically reduced. A highly contagious eye disease, trachoma is the greatest cause of progressive sight loss in the eastern Mediterranean region. Seasonal conjunctivitis, often prompted by irritation of the eyes by wind and dust, frequently triggers the onset of trachoma. The trachoma virus can be transmitted from eye to eye by houseflies, by hand or even by contaminated towels, as might happen in a family with only one towel.

Despite the ease with which the disease may be transmitted, treatment at UNRWA health centres, in combination with improved hygiene and sanitation in the camps, has brought a dramatic drop in the rate of trachoma among Palestine refugees: from an estimated 16,000 cases(40,392 treatments) in 1961 to 636 cases in 1973. In this way, UNRWA has helped preserve the sight of scores of refugee children who might otherwise be blind today.

Regular health checks for school children are part of the Agency's programme of health care.

Although UNRWA maintains close supervision over the health of refugee children from birth to the age of two, budgetary limitations make it impossible to provide regular health supervision services for children from the time they are three until they enter school at the age of six. Nevertheless, children in this age group do have access to curative medical care whenever they fall sick.

Additionally, for children in this three-to-six age group, UNRWA has established a programme of pre-school play centres where the mental development and initiative of the children are encouraged and their health supervised. This popular programme, which must be funded from special donations and contributions, now consists of 32 centres serving over 4,000 children. In the Gaza Strip the American Friends Service Committee took over this activity in 1970 on behalf of UNRWA and has continued to improve the programme.

Regular health supervision is provided for more than a quarter of a million children between the ages of six and 15 through school health programmes in UNRWA's 546 elementary and preparatory schools. In these schools, refugee children receive a regular medical check-up and, increasingly, a dental check-up as well. Many of them also benefit from daily hot meals and milk distributed to them through UNRWA's supplementary feeding programme (described at greater length in the section on "An Adequate Standard of Living"). A health education programme is also conducted in the schools.

Through its comprehensive health services, UNRWA has managed to provide that special care for refugee mothers and children which is the right of all mothers and children everywhere. Yet the services necessary to maintain this right are being endangered by the same financial crisis which presently threatens to bring cuts in all of UNRWA's programmes for the Palestine refugees. Only additional contributions from governments, organizations and individuals will ensure that an already deprived people do not find themsleves further deprived.

New mothers attend a lecture at an infant health clinic.

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